

LETTER ADDRESSED TO PRESIDENT PADEREWSKI BY THE JEWISH DEPUTIES IN THE POLISH DIET.

Mr. President: It being impossible for us to address you in the form of a parliamentary interpellation, because an interpellation requires fifteen signatures, we find ourselves obliged to hand you the following letter:

When you took in hand the government of the country, you declared loudly that the Jewish population in Poland would enjoy equal rights and could, like other citizens, count on the protection of the law.

This formula, to be sure, did not satisfy our aspirations as a national minority. But we hoped that after the terrible days of Kielce and of Lemberg, after a whole series of pogroms in the cities and villages of western Galicia, the life and property of Jews would finally be secure.

But our hopes have not been realized. Dark forces which for a moment suspended their activity have returned to their work with increased bitterness. It has become certain that there exist organizations for the object of exciting the mass of the people against the Jews and of preparing systematically pogroms and excesses more and more brutal against the Jewish population. Toward the middle of March, as if by signal, a pogrom broke out at Kalich, Brest, Schidlow, Stopnitz and in a whole series of villages of the provinces of Kalisch and Kielce. A pogrom soon broke out at Wie'n. In May a pogrom took place at Lublin, at Mielow, Slomnicki, Keonch. At the same time a Polish army was committing pogroms in the following cities of Central Galicia; Rzeszow, Kolbuszow, and a whole series of villages of the district of Stroujischow. The authorities, with a few rare exceptions, have not come to the aid of the Jews, or have done so in derisive fashion. The military authorities have indeed not refused to intervene, but up to the present their action has had no result—the inquiry into the pogrom at Kielce furnishes a striking example. Even when the inquiry was energetically conducted the authorities contented themselves with bringing to the bar the lesser persons concerned in making pogroms and did not trouble to discover the organization which directs them.

In the army and in administrative offices Jew-hunting is openly encouraged. Posters are put up in the streets menacing Jews with excesses if Polish diplomacy is not successful. These posters remain on the walls for a half-day and the police arrest people who tear them down. Using as a pretext the campaign against monopoly and speculation, searches are made, among Jews only, at Lodz, Louxof, Konsk and in many other cities. These searches almost never lead to the discovery of hidden supplies, but on the other hand they result in the disappearance of money and jewelry from the homes where they take place. The little food that these people have for their own use is taken from them. These searches are also organized under the pretext of hunting arms. Naturally none are found but the opportunity is taken to profane the Jewish synagogues with no respect for Jewish religious feelings. At the same time the houses and shops of Christians are carefully avoided. No Christian passer-by is submitted to search which gives the impression that only Jews speculate or hide arms.

In Lithuania the persecutions of

Jews take a still more terrible form. At Pinsk 35 Jews were shot without judgment and without any trial on the false pretext that they were Bolsheviks. It was the same way at Vilna, at Lida, and at Porick, and we find ourselves faced with similar events, although less atrocious in form, at Volkovisk and at Proujani. The Jewish population of Lithuania, which looked forward to being freed by Poland from the Bolsheviks, was plunged into disillusionment and terror.

The government takes little trouble to put an end to the excesses against the Jews in Western Galicia and in Lithuania. The policy of half-measures, the care with which one avoids attaining the root of the evils, the immunity of the real trouble-makers—these are the reasons why the pogroms spread into new regions where they take new forms.

Every movement of soldiers in the country leaves traces of Jewish blood and tears. Two days after the legionaries from Posmania arrived at Warsaw, the Jews were attacked in Preta and the surrounding streets, under the pretext that a saloon-keeper had sold alcohol to burn one of these legionaries. The idea that tribunals exist which might punish the guilty Jew has completely disappeared from the mind of the crowd. All the Jews must pay for the fault of one. Other soldiers arrive and immediately anti-Jewish pogroms break out at Novi Dvor, Vakrotchkin, Khlain and other places. Jews are whipped and tortured in the railway stations and trains. The Koval Station at Warsaw was the scene of a veritable Jew hunt on May 13th. After these events, the outrages take new forms; Jewish beards are cut off.

When they pass through the cities the recruits beat the Jews and extort money from them by all sorts of tortures. All these misdeeds occur under the eyes of the authorities and go unpunished. The Christian crowds are convinced that attacks on the life, person or property of Jews bring no punishment. It is true that the authorities address appeals to the people, threatening punishment for such acts. But at the same time they distribute circulars and communiques which justify the misdeeds of the pogromists and purport to render the Jews responsible for them. The same methods are employed by judges, aldermen, and even by certain groups in the Diet. The record of this sort is exceeded by the semi-official telegraphic agency P. A. T., which in its highly colored news both abroad and in Poland conducts a systematic campaign against Jews in general and certain order and anarchy.

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